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AUTHOR Morris, Betty Zane
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ABSTRACT

A study investigated humanities grants activity in the discipline of speech communication. Specifically examined were (1) whether state councils differed substantially in types of programs offered, guidelines, or procedures; (2) the percentages of programs, project directors, and sponsors within the field of communication (such as rhetoric, public address, literature, and theater programs); (3) outstanding examples of funded projects that fall specifically within the communication field; and (4) other issues that should be addressed for communication professors in the United States. Directors of various state and regional humanities councils furnished information for analysis by means of direct inquiry or published essays. Results indicated that the similarities of state programs were greater than the differences. Results also indicated that a limited number of communication scholars are involved in programs sponsored by humanities councils. Specific projects funded in the communication field were difficult to identify, but projects that used activities and concepts taught in communication departments were mentioned. Some issues of interest to all communication scholars were those related to the formulation of ideas and the writing of successful proposals for the humanities, including careful examination of proposed budgets, presentation of specific detailed descriptions, and emphasis of humanities content. (Eleven references are attached.) (NKA)

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STATE HUMANITIES COUNCILS AND COMMUNICATION ARTS PROGRAMS

BY

Betty Zane Morris

Shorter College

Rome, Georgia

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WHILE YOU'RE UP, GET ME A GRANT

SPEECH COMMUNICATION ASSOCIATION

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

NOVEMBER 6, 1987

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State Humanities Councils and Communication Arts Programs

In FY 1987, the National Endowment for the Humanities had a total budget of $138,490,000. Of the nine divisions in NEH (State Programs,Education Programs, Fellowships, Research Grants, Preservation, Media, Museums, Public Humanities, and Libraries), the State Program budget allotment of $21,000,000 was the largest. In a recent Legislative Alert from the Federation of State Humanities Councils, it is reported that a Senate Subcommittee has recommended $21,500,000 for FY 1988 (Alert 1). While this has not been approved at this writing, it is evidence of a strong desire for continued support for the State Humanities Programs.

A common complaint from Communication administrators and faculty is that their financial needs exceed their resources. While most of the State Humanities Councils establish guidelines which provide primarily for the "out-of-school" adult (as opposed to funding for college programs), there are many ways in which a Communications academician may initiate programs which will be beneficial to the college as well as to the general public.

As a participant and project director in several public program grants from the Georgia Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Humanities, I have seen firsthand the value of programs which are sponsored by a Communication department. As a Board Member and Vice-Chairman of the Georgia Endowment for the Humanities, I have learned about the process of obtaining a program grant--from concept, planning and organizing, securing support from colleagues and the community, writing the application, and the review process by the Board which determines funding.

The purpose of this paper is to present some findings from my inquiries concerning Humanities grants activity in the discipline of Communication. In my inquiries, I asked four questions:

1. Do State Councils differ substantively in types of programs offered, guidelines, procedures, etc.?
2. Do you have any percentages of programs, project directors, sponsors, etc. that fall within the field of Communication, such as rhetoric and public address, literature, theatre, etc.? (Communication encompasses so many areas, that this may be difficult to identify precisely.)
3. Can you suggest any outstanding examples of projects funded which do fall specifically within the Communications field?
4. Are there other issues which should be addressed for this particular group of Communication professors from all over the country?

I will attempt to report my findings to these questions, and will summarize with ideas and suggestions from the point of view of one who has been the recipient of several Georgia or National Endowment for the Humanities grants and also from the point of view of one who helps to make the funding decision. In addition, material is available which has been sent here for you by Margaret E. McMillan of the Federation of State Humanities Councils.

Initial inquiries concerning numbers and types of Communication proposals submitted and funded were made to Dr. Jamil S. Zainaldin, Executive Director of the Federation of State Humanities Councils in Washington, D. C., Dr. Ronald Benson, Executive Director of the Georgia Endowment for the Humanities, and Dr. Thomas Brewer, Vice-President for Academic Affairs, Georgia State University, Chairman of the Georgia Endowment for the Humanities and a substantial past history of involvement with other State Councils. Additional information has come from Margaret E. McMillan, Program Associate for the Federation of State Humanities Councils, and from Humanities Discourse, a monthly publication of the Federation. Zainaldin sent out a

request for information on this topic in the Federation's monthly NEWS, which is mailed to all State Councils.

1. Do State Councils differ substantively in types of programs offered, guidelines, procedures, etc.?

BENSON: "There is a great deal of similarity among humanities councils, although considerable diversity has developed in the last ten years. The potential range of topics is much greater now than when all programs were related to public policy issues. The fundamental objectives and procedures are shared by most state councils."

ZAINALDIN: "In a way they do. Some have come to be known as sympathetic to certain types of projects (e.g. New York funds excellent media productions; Virginia funds scholarly symposia for public audiences; Vermont specializes in library-based reading and discussion programs). The main thing is that procedures are fairly constant from state to state (from proposal to review to funding levels), and I would suggest that you use Georgia as an example to explain generic things like "types of programs" and how councils make distinctions and decisions in viewing proposals."

2. Do you have any percentages of programs, project directors, sponsors, etc. that fall within the field of Communication?

BENSON: "We do not have any statistics summarizing the involvement of communication arts in humanities grants. I believe the number is relatively small, but might be increased if imaginative projects were encouraged and developed."

ZAINALDIN: "Many (would fall in the Communications field)...to the extent they touch on humanities themes. The Kansas humanities council (see articles enclosed) has funded a Chautauqua that features live performances of historical personages (e.g. John Brown, Alf Landon, Theodore Roosevelt). The North Dakota council has funded a 'live' performance of Thomas Jefferson portrayed by a remarkable actor named Clay Jenkinson. You may safely say to

your audience that councils will fund quality communications programs that seek to convey humanities content--in theater, all forms of public address, etc."

In the two year funding proposal submitted by the Georgia Endowment for the Humanities to the National Endowment for the Humanities, out of 503 Humanities Scholars participating in 1985-86 grant activities, 14 were listed as Communication Scholars. Their roles were as follows:

Project Director	1
Planner	2
Presenter	1
Speaker	7
Writer	0
Consultant	3
Evaluator	2

In two cases, two roles were assumed by the scholar.

Other fields which are often connected with Communication Departments included: Drama and Theatre Studies, 11 Scholars; Folklore, 21 Scholars; Film History and Criticism, 3 Scholars (Georgia Endowment for Humanities Proposal to NEH 122-126).

In contrast, History Scholars and Literature Scholars who were involved during 1985-86 grant activities were represented by 181 in History and 156 in Literature (126-140). The frequency of representation in these disciplines offers strong possibilities of combining the efforts of Literature and History with Communication methods and techniques of presentation, for unusual, appealing programs that offer variety from the standard lecture/humanities scholar reaction/discussion format.

3. Can you suggest any outstanding examples of projects funded which do fall specifically within the Communications field?

BENSON: "Some grants have supported one person dramatic presentations

of historic characters, such as Thomas Jefferson....Some programs you developed used literature as the subject in a creative way. Oral interpretation and dramatic presentations can set the stage for discussion of specific writings in the humanities. A play has been written on the participation of Georgia's delegates to the Constitutional Convention. We expect that this will be performed widely throughout the state in 1988. Such a dramatic presentation of about forty minutes could be the first part of a program considering the significance of the Constitution to Georgia. Some groups have used films to provide insight into certain cultural issues. The use of drama and theatre...certainly strengthen humanities programs in many cases."

ZAINALDIN: "Outstanding projects as illustrative? More to report here soon, I hope." (He enclosed newspaper announcements of the Chautauqua events he mentioned earlier).

In further correspondence and telephone conversations with Zainaldin and Margaret McMillan, they expressed disbelief that they had no responses from their requests in NEWS for information regarding Communications projects. This type of request usually results in many replies from the State Councils, as they attempt to help maintain up-to-date profiles of projects nationwide. Both indicated belief that many of the projects have Communication-related themes or methods but are catalogued under another discipline.

An examination of six recent issues of Humanities Discourse revealed: a New Hampshire project "The Ninth State," which will feature a twenty-part newspaper series drawn from the New England press of 1787-88, and which will extend to thirty communities through a travelling play, exhibit and speakers' bureau (Volume I, No. 8, p.2); an article describing arts and humanities projects in Utah, including lecture/performance/discussion of plays, folklore projects, a traveling production of Greek drama, films, and a Shakespeare Festival (Volume I, No. 6, p.3).

Benson enclosed several announcements of Humanities programs to which Communication topics were centrally employed, such as the "Atlanta Third World Film Festival"; "Family: The Ties That Bind—Film and Video Workshops for the Whole Family"; "Beckett/Atlanta: A Festival of the Arts and Humanities" including performances, lecture-discussions, films and exhibits; and a report from the Sunday New York Times, February 8, 1987, of "Yours Sincerely: Three Evenings of Letters" produced by the Poetry Center of the 92nd Street Y.

In the two years I have served on the Board for the Georgia Endowment for the Humanities, the Board has read and funded proposals entitled: "Celebration of James Weldon Johnson", a series of performances, workshops and seminars; "Reflections: A Carson McCullers Symposium", a conference featuring discussion, reading groups, and film series; "Introducing Major Poets to Georgia Communities", featuring two major poets touring Georgia and reading from their works in seven locations; "Oral Traditions of Farm Families: A Source of Strength Today", featuring research into folklore of farm families, woven into a 45-minute stage presentation.

One area of Communication which has received many grants in the Humanities is Oral Interpretation. For example, the Interpreters Theatre program in the Department of Communication at Arizona State University has been awarded a $180,000 two-year research and performance grant recently by the National Endowment for the Humanities (Literature in Performance, Vol. 7, No. 1, p.83).

A description of a project initiated in a Communications Department is one in which I had a central role. In 1982, I was the Project Director for a series of six programs entitled "The Novel Woman in Her Day and Ours." This was a collaborative effort with a Professor of English Literature from Shorter College, and with several sponsoring organizations. The purpose of the programs was to examine the roles that women assumed in 18th and 19th Century England, as portrayed in classic English literature, and to compare those with

roles women find themselves in today: The Maternal Woman, The Working Woman, The Social Woman, The Religious Woman, The Romantic Woman, and The Enlightened Woman. The format for each of the six programs was a Readers Theatre presentation of selected literature, followed by a discussion with two Humanities Scholars and moderated by Dr. Wingard. She selected the literature and I adapted and directed it for presentation. Together we chose the Humanities Scholars and made other necessary decisions. Communications students in my department were selected to form the repertory company for the six programs, were given three hours credit for their work, and were paid a small stipend from the grant budget. Three of the programs were chosen for videotaping, done in cooperation with our local public library and our Rome Cable Channel. The tapes are a part of our college library, public library, and are available statewide through our Humanities Resource Center (a GEH Council-sponsored project) at Georgia Southern College.

Community involvement is, of course, a requirement for Public Programs and we felt that we were very successful in achieving that goal. The average attendance for each program was 100, with the audience being drawn from the community and the college. Other benefits, however, accrued to the college in amounts we did not expect. A careful publicity plan (designed by a Communications student for credit and stipend) was followed, resulting in a great deal of visibility on campus, in Rome, and statewide. Three different invitations came to me to present programs at professional meetings about this activity, including one from the Georgia Endowment for the Humanities' State Conference which "highlighted outstanding Humanities Projects" for 1983.

Lynne Cheney, Chairman, National Endowment for the Humanities, in a recent NEH publication, American Memory, stresses the importance of Humanities in the public schools (Cheney 27-29). This is a relatively new shift of emphasis for NEH, and offers many possibilities for colleges and State Councils. One exciting proposal, "The Humanities and Critical Inquiry," which

was reviewed and funded by the Georgia Endowment for the Humanities is a striking example of how we might make that public school connection. This proposal, submitted by the Communication Research Center of the Georgia Institute of Technology, describes a plan to conduct a twelve-month pilot project for a group of teachers and parents of tenth-grade students at Carver High School in Atlanta. "We will model for teachers and for parents various ways in which a sequence of reading and writing activities about humanities texts can help students to learn to think critically. We will also guide these teachers in preparing instructional modules based on reading, writing, and thinking about selected humanities texts" (Communication Research Center).

The implications of the emphasis on Humanities in the public schools carries enormous potential for college and public school collaboration. And what is a more natural alliance for study?

While this does not provide an exhaustive listing of projects that are Communication-related or Communication-centered, it has attempted to demonstrate the ways in which our discipline may enhance programs from other academic departments and, perhaps, to suggest program ideas which we might develop.

4. Are there other issues which should be addressed for this particular group of Communication professors from all over the country?

BENSON: "Humanities programs focus on texts, writings, and documents from the various disciplines in the humanities. It is also assumed that methodologies of humanities discipline will be used for analysis and reflection on the subject matter under consideration. Programs for audiences could be much more effective if formats other than lecture were utilized more extensively. The communication arts field can be especially valuable by providing approaches to humanities subjects that will stimulate the imagination of audiences. The humanities rely extensively on the use of language, especially the written word, and often use a style and vocabulary

that can be difficult for the average citizen to understand and appreciate....How can humanities programs serve adult audiences in counties where a majority of the residents are not high school graduates. How can poor readers be motivated and helped to read books in literature or history? Scholarly conferences may not be relevant to the needs of many persons we intend to serve....I am disappointed with programs that attempt to serve an audience by minimizing the humanities content....Humanities scholars can collaborate with specialists in other fields to design and present programs. The expertise of communication arts specialists can enhance the effectiveness of humanities programs. In some cases this can be done when the emphasis is on a subject in the humanities and also when a communication arts field is used to provide an imaginative format or method of presentation."

ZAINALDIN: "I would focus on the major thrusts of state council programs, again suggesting you freely use your own experience and not feel that Georgia is a special case. You will be speaking for a lot of other councils, in fact. Small grants, community-based, humanities content (generously defined), the centrality of the scholar....To the extent that the communications field involves "audiences," faculty in this field may be very attractive to councils who always are concerned about audiences for programs. Also councils stand ready to help people who have questions or ideas, and the purpose of the staff is to help move project ideas along to where a strong proposal can be developed."

SUMMARY

1. Benson and Zainaldin agreed that, while State Councils do take some different emphases in types of programs they like to fund, the similarities of programs are greater than the differences. Zainaldin believed that Georgia offered a program typical enough that some generalizations could be made concerning other state programs.

2. Neither Benson nor Zainaldin arrived at percentages of programs, project directors, sponsors, etc., that fall within the field of Communication. However, some numbers of Communication Scholars from one year of Georgia activity suggest limited involvement.

3. As stated earlier, this paper did not attempt to provide an exhaustive list of projects funded in the Communication field. A few specific projects were listed, and there are others which have been funded, but were not reported. Both Benson and Zainaldin, along with other sources consulted, mentioned many projects which utilize activities and concepts taught in departments of Communication. Both stressed the particular qualities a Communications approach might bring to a humanities program: imagination, audience-centered ideas (as in performances, small group involvement, etc.), analysis of speeches and other rhetorical acts, etc., and indicated their potential. I believe that humanities proposals from our discipline have been lacking, that this source of program development might be used to a much greater degree, and that we can provide significant strength alone or in combination with other humanities disciplines.

4. Other issues were limited primarily to concerns related to the formulation of ideas and the writing of proposals for the humanities. A number of suggestions were given from sources consulted. These, in combination with personal experience gained in writing and reviewing proposals as a GEH Board member, are offered as the conclusion for this paper:

a. Call a program officer in your State Council office and discuss

your idea. Do this to check the eligibility of the concept, and to question or clarify throughout the planning process. Program officers are usually very willing to assist, can save you time and effort, and they can answer questions about your proposal from the Board in the reviewing process.

b. Follow the guidelines explicitly. If you are not sure, ask the program officer.

c. Explain and document your budget carefully. Budgets are <u>always</u> examined.

d. Give specific detailed descriptions.

e. Use your imagination in linking <u>ideas, methods and disciplines</u>. Innovative ideas catch the attention of the Board.

f. KEEP THE HUMANITIES CONTENT CENTRAL TO THE PROGRAM. If you lose sight of it, the proposal is doomed.

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